

MONTENEGRO

PREFACE

Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, lies in a broad plain crossed by five rivers and surrounded by mountains, just 20 kilometers from the Albanian border. The city has a population of around 180,000 people. Bombed into rubble during World War II, Podgorica was rebuilt into a modern urban center, with high-rise apartment buildings and new office and shopping developments. While the latest Balkan war had a low impact on the physical structures, the economic sanctions had a devastating effect on employment and infrastructure. With the help of foreign investment, urban renewal is evident throughout the city, but much of it may still appear run down. Podgorica has a European-style town center with a pedestrian-only walking street (mall) and an assortment of restaurants, cafes, and boutiques. To many, its principal attraction is as a base for the exploration of Montenegro's natural beauty, with mountains and wild countryside all around and the stunning Adriatic coastline less than an hour away. This is a mountainous region with barren moorlands and virgin forests, with fast-flowing rivers and picturesque lakes; Skadar Lake in particular is of ecological significance. The coastline is known for its sandy beaches and dramatic coves: for example, Kotor – the city that is protected by UNESCO and the wonderful Cathedral of Saint Typhoon; the unique baroque Perast; Saint George and Our Lady of the Rock islands – all locations that tell a story of a lasting civilization and the wealth of the most wonderful bay in the world. The area around the city of Kotor is a UNESCO World Heritage site for its natural beauty and historic significance. Montenegrins are known as fiercely independent mountaineers who fought the Turks and continued to resist long after they were supposedly conquered. Their warriors were also poets, which is most embodied in “The Mountain Wreath,” by Petar Petrović-Njegoš.

Relatively few foreigners reside in the area. Knowledge of foreign languages—English, German, and Italian—is widespread among young, educated Montenegrins and those working in the coastal tourist industry. For everyday purposes, however, some knowledge of Montenegrin is essential.

Cultural life is active, although less vibrant and diverse than in the major world centers. Montenegrins have a deep interest in art and are avid movie goers: European and American films are shown in the original version with Montenegrin/Serbian subtitles. Local, contemporary artists are presented at art exhibits. Several painters and sculptors work in Montenegro today; some have exhibited abroad with considerable success. Montenegro offers various summer and winter sports: water polo, water rafting, biking, tennis, downhill and cross-country skiing, hiking and camping. Podgorica offers museums, concerts, theatre, ballet, professional soccer and basketball teams, well developed range of outdoor cafés and restaurants.

AREA, GEOGRAPHY, AND CLIMATE

Area/Geography

Terrain in Montenegro ranges from high mountains in the northern part of the country, through karst segment in central and western part, to a narrow coastal plain. The coastal plain disappears completely in the north, where Mount Lovcen and other mountain ranges plunge abruptly into the inlet of the Gulf of Kotor. The coastal region is noted for seismic activity.

Montenegro's section of the karst lies generally at elevations of 900m (3,000 ft) above sea level-although some areas rise to 1800m (6,000 ft). The lowest segment is in the valley of the Zeta River, which flows at an elevation of 450m (1,500 ft). The river occupies the centre of Nikšić field, a flat-floored, elongated depression typical of karstic regions. The underlying rock is predominantly limestone, which dissolves to form sinkholes and underground caves.

The Zeta River Valley, or Bjelopavlici plain, merges in the southeast with the second significant flat lowland in Montenegro, the Zeta plain. Zeta plain stretches north of the Lake Skadar at elevation of 40m (130ft). The two plains are today the most densely populated areas of Montenegro, housing two of Montenegro's biggest cities, Podgorica and Nikšić.

The high mountains of Montenegro include some of the most rugged terrain in Europe. They average more than 2000m (7,000 ft) in elevation. Among notable peaks is Bobotov Kuk in the Durmitor mountain, which reaches 2,523m (8,278 ft). The Montenegrin mountains were the most ice-eroded section of the Balkan Peninsula during the last glacial period.

The coast of Montenegro is 294 km long. Unlike its northern neighbor Croatia, Montenegro has no large inhabited islands along the coast. A notable feature of the Montenegrin coast is the Bay of Kotor, a fjord-like gulf, which is in fact a submerged river canyon. The Bay of Kotor is surrounded by mountains up to 1000m high, which plunge almost vertically into the sea.

To the south of the Bay of Kotor, there is a narrow coastal plain, no more than 4km wide, which is guarded from the north by high mountains. The plain provided space for numerous small coastal settlements.

Climate

Montenegro's lower areas enjoy a Mediterranean climate, having dry summers and mild, rainy winters. Temperature varies greatly with elevation. Podgorica, lying near sea level, is noted for having the warmest July temperatures in Montenegro, averaging 27 °C (81 °F).

Cetinje, in the karst at an elevation of 670m (2,200 ft), has a temperature 5 °C (10 °F) lower. January temperatures range from 8 °C (46 °F) at Bar on the southern coast to -3 °C (27 °F) in the northern mountains.

Montenegro's mountainous regions receive some of the highest amounts of rainfall in Europe. Annual precipitation at Crkvice, in the karst above the Bay of Kotor, is 4,928 millimeters (194 inches). Like most areas along the Mediterranean Sea, precipitation occurs principally during the cold part of the year, but in the higher mountains a secondary summer maximum is present. Snow cover is rare along the Montenegrin coast. It averages 10 days in karstic depressions and increases to 120 days in the higher mountains.

POPULATION

According to 2003 census, Montenegro has 620,145 citizens. If the methodology used up to 1991 was used in the 2003 census, Montenegro would officially have 673,094 citizens. Most recent estimates stake the numbers somewhere below 700,000 inhabitants.

According to the 2007 Constitution, the country is home to Montenegrins, Serbs, Bosniaks, Albanians, Muslims, Croats, and others. Ethnic composition according to the 2004 official data:

Montenegrin	267,669
Serbs	198,414
Bosniaks	48,184
Albanians	45,163
Ethnic Muslims	24,625
Croats	6,811
Roma	2,601
Yugoslavs	1,860
other	68,818
TOTALS	620,145

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Montenegro is defined as a "civic, democratic, and ecological state of social justice, based on the reign of Law". It is an independent and sovereign Republic. It proclaimed its new Constitution on 22 October 2007.

Government

The current Government of Montenegro (Vlada Crne Gore) is composed of the prime minister, the deputy prime ministers as well as ministers. Milo Djukanovic is the Prime Minister of Montenegro and head of the Government. The ruling party in Montenegro ever since multiparty system was introduced is the controversial Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro (DPS) (Demokratska Partija Socijalista Crna Gore), in coalition with the much smaller Social Democratic Party of Montenegro (SDP) (Socijaldemokratska Partija Crne Gore).

President

President Filip Vujanovic. The President of Montenegro was reelected for a period of five years through direct elections in April 2013. According to the constitution, the President represents the republic in the country and abroad, promulgates laws by ordinance, calls elections for the Parliament, proposes candidates for the Prime Minister, president and justices of the Constitutional Court to the Parliament, proposes to the Parliament calling of a referendum, grants amnesty for criminal offences prescribed by the national law, confers decoration and awards, and performs all other duties in accordance with the Constitution. The President is also a member of the Supreme Defense Council.

Parliament

The Montenegrin Parliament (Skupština Crne Gore) passes all laws in Montenegro, ratifies international treaties, appoints the Prime Minister, ministers, and justices of all courts, adopts the budget and performs other duties as established by the Constitution. The Parliament can pass a vote of no-confidence on the Government by a majority of the members. One representative is elected per 6,000 voters.

ARTS, SCIENCE, AND EDUCATION

Culture

The culture of Montenegro has been shaped by a variety of influences throughout history. The influence of Orthodox, Slavonic, Central European, Islamic, and seafaring Adriatic cultures (notably parts of Italy, like the Republic of Venice) have been the most important in recent centuries.

Montenegro has many significant cultural and historical sites, including heritage sites from the pre-Romanesque, Gothic, and Baroque periods. The Montenegrin coastal region is especially well known for its religious monuments, including the Cathedral of Saint Tryphon in Kotor^[19] (Cattaro under the Venetians), the basilica of St. Luke (over 800 years), Our Lady of the Rocks (Škrpjela), the Savina Monastery and others. Montenegro's medieval monasteries contain thousands of square meters of frescos on their walls.

The traditional folk dance of the Montenegrins is the Oro, a circle dance that involves dancers standing on each other's shoulders in a circle while one or two dancers are dancing in the middle.

The first literary works written in the region are ten centuries old, and the first Montenegrin book was printed five hundred years ago. The first state-owned printing press was located in Cetinje in 1494, where the first South Slavic book, Oktoih, was printed the same year. Ancient manuscripts, dating from the thirteenth century, are kept in Montenegrin monasteries.^[20]

Montenegro's capital Podgorica and the former, royal capital of Cetinje are the two most important centers of culture and the arts in the country.

Education

Education in Montenegro is regulated by the Montenegrin Ministry of Education and Science.

Education starts in either pre-schools or elementary schools. Children enroll in elementary schools (Montenegrin/Serbian: Osnovna škola) at the age of 6; it lasts 9 years. The students may continue their secondary education, which lasts 4 years (3 years for trade schools) and ends with graduation (Matura). Higher education lasts with a certain first degree after 3 to 6 years.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Montenegro has natural resources, primarily bauxite, adequate water supplies, and a climate conducive to agriculture and tourism. The establishment of the bauxite-alumina-aluminum industry after World War II provided Montenegro with a core strategic industry, which has suffered from high production costs since the first energy crisis in 1973. In the 1960s, tourism began its initial growth, largely attracting visitors from Eastern Europe. War and sanctions in the early 1990s hit Montenegro hard, and recovery only really began after the end of the Kosovo crisis in 1999 and the adoption of the deutschmark (DM) in November 1999, which largely disconnected Montenegro's economy from Serbia and the Serbian dinar.

During the last decade, Montenegro has begun creating a business-friendly investment climate. The Euro replaced the DM on March 31, 2002. The country established the lowest corporate tax rate in the region (9%) and Standard & Poors has confirmed the long-term (BB+) and short-term (B) credit rating for Montenegro in November 2008. It also confirmed the AAA rating, which concerns the transfer and assessment of convertibility. According to official statistics the inflation rate for the first three months of 2013 was 3.2 %. More than 85% of capital value in Montenegrin companies had been privatized by December 2008. The banking sector, telecommunications, and oil import and distribution in Montenegro are 100% privately owned. Capital structure analysis shows that the state still has shares in 65 companies, and in 53.8% of those the state has more than 50% ownership. The biggest improvement Montenegro has made has been in the area of tax policy. Montenegro introduced value added tax (VAT) in April 2003, and introduced tax rates of 17% and 7% (for tourism) as of January 2006. The lower VAT rate for tourism is to encourage growth in this strategic industry. Montenegro also decreased the personal income tax (PIT), and a 15% flat rate was implemented in January 2007; a 12% rate was implemented in January 2009.

Net foreign direct investment (FDI) in first nine months 2012 reached €349 billion and investment per capita is one of the highest in Europe. Tourism and tourism investments, particularly along the Adriatic coast, are booming. The independent World Travel and Tourism Council repeatedly has ranked Montenegro as the top growing tourism destination in the world, with growth estimated at 10% annually through 2016.

TRANSPORTATION

Roads in Montenegro are far below European standards. Economic crises during 1990s and Yugoslav wars left the country with no means to finance maintenance and expansion of the road network.

All roads in Montenegro are two-laned only. In recent years roads between connection of Podgorica and the coastal towns have improved significantly with the completion of Sozina tunnel, which shortened the journey from Podgorica to Bar to under half an hour and made the trip significantly safer.

In the north, the road from Podgorica to Kolašin through Moraca canyon to Serbia is considered one of the most dangerous routes in Europe, especially during the winter. Preparatory work has begun on a bypass for the canyon. This project is of strategic importance to Montenegro, as this corridor is currently the weak link in Montenegro's road network.

Local Transportation

There are several taxi stands within a city, run by their various local associations (black or green background of their lighted rooftop with "Taxi" sign). The basic price is the same. Other colored taxis may or may not have or use a bona fide Taxi Meter and visitors should be cautious, due to their tendency to ask 2-3 times more from foreigners.

Reasonable prices for most of the destinations in Podgorica should be no more than 5 € (vary from 1-5 €) and to the airport 15-20 €. Most taxis are modern and use meters with price of ~0.50 €/km with some also charging a start fee of ~1.00 €.

Main Taxi Stands

Downtown: across from City Hall, next to the Public Library and Hotel Crna Gora.

By Maša Restaurant: Bulevar Sv. Petra Cetinjskog

By Sahat Kula (Clock Tower): Brace Zlaticanina

Other locations: The bus and train station, and the "Velika" and "Mala" "Kamion" Piazzas (green markets).

Regional Transportation

Check the daily newspapers for a complete schedule of all arrivals and departures to or from Podgorica. All tickets may be purchased on site just prior to the departure. Advanced reservations are required for trains only: during the high summer season, for sleeping cabin or vehicle transport.

During the summer season, the number of buses is increased on most lines through Montenegro, especially to and from the coast. Timetables are arranged for every year separately. All train and bus times are listed daily in Vijesti newspaper.

The existing railways are 249 km long and are predominately electrified. The main railway is Bar-Podgorica-Belgrade with a branch towards Nikšić and the other one towards Skadar (Albania). There are five passenger trains on the Bar-Belgrade route per day: three-express trains, one business, one auto-car and one train with sleeping cars. On the Bar-Subotica line there is one daily express train with sleeping cars. The passenger trains on the Bar-Belgrade line are connected with international trains to Budapest, Vienna, Bucharest, Athens, Moscow etc. Passenger service to Nikšić to start as soon as rail line is finished being electrified.

Montenegro is connected with whole world by the Adriatic Sea, and there is a regular ferry on the route: Bar-Bari (Italy). All ferry times listed daily in Vijesti newspaper.

Montenegro Airlines is the national carrier of Montenegro. The airplanes fly from Podgorica to Belgrade, Frankfurt, Zurich, Ljubljana and Paris. During the summer season there are also flights from Düsseldorf and Rome. It is recommended to check departure times the day before the flight.

The airport is located 12km outside of center Podgorica near Golubovæi. The drive from the center of Podgorica takes about 20 minutes. The airport is off of the road the goes to Petrovac and Bar.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone and Postal Services

The telephone system is adequate, but international calls can be expensive in Montenegro.

To place an international a call from your house or a public phone, you need to dial 00, the country code, the city (area) code and the number of the person you want to talk to. To find out the price per minute for your international call you can dial Telephone information operator at 1181.

To call Montenegro from abroad, dial the international access code, followed by 382 (country code), area code (without the initial zero), and the number.

In order to save money on overseas calls it is advisable to have an American telephone charge card or subscribe to a call back service.

International phone calls can also be made through the Internet.

Vonage. Vonage is a VOIP the plugs into a broadband Internet connect. Uses local USA phone numbers of your choice. They offer multiple different phone plans. Cheap and Reliable. 1-800-705-7092. www.vonage.com

Net2phone. Check the website for instructions on how to download the program and how to subscribe. <http://www.net2phone.com/>

Skype. Skype is a program for making free calls over the internet to anyone else who also has Skype. It's free and easy to download and use, and works with most computers. Another option you can use Skype to call ordinary phone numbers all over the world for a small fee. For more information go to www.skype.com

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones operate on a pre-paid voucher card system. Mobile phone companies, T-Mobile Crna Gora and ProMonte offer prepaid packages.

Internet Access

Podgorica has 2 (two) Internet providers. General satisfaction with the service is good.

The two Internet Service Providers are:

T-com, Home page: <http://www.t-com.me/>

M-tel, Main Website is: <http://www.mtel-cg.com>

TV

Major TV stations include:

RTCG (Radio Televizija Crne Gore): <http://www.rtcg.org> a national public broadcaster set up in 2002. 3 local TV and 14 local radio stations are part of the PBS as well.

IN: <http://www.rtv.in.com/> - First private digital TV in the Balkans. Owned by a Slovenian group.

NTV Montena: <http://www.montena.cg.yu/> - Private TV station established in the '90s

MBC: Private TV station, established in the '90s;

PINK- M TV: <http://www.rtpink.com> - Entertainment, music. Part of Pink Group of Serbia.

Elmag TV: <http://www.elmag.net> - TV station that broadcast NFL games.

Atlas TV: <http://www.rtvatlas.tv/> - Founded in early 2007. Part of Atlas Group.

Vijesti TV: <http://www.vijesti.me> - It is producing a program, has a cable license and several terrestrial licenses but not in Podgorica.

Radio

Radio Antenna M: <http://www.antenam.net> - First private independent radio station.

Voice of America: Montenegrin correspondent is part of VOA's Serbian service; regularly broadcast on RTCG.

Radio Free Europe: As part of the South Slavic program, Montenegro has a special half hour program every day.

Other stations which play music: Atlas Radio, 90.7FM; City Radio, 88.1FM; Radio Elmag 96FM; PRO-FM, RCG, Radio Budva

Newspapers, Magazines, and Journals

Wire Services

MINA News Agency: <http://www.mnnews.net> - The only Montenegrin wire service.

AP, Reuters, AFP, Tass and Serbian and Bosnia wire services have local correspondents. More recently, there has been a Christian Science Monitor stringer staying here

Newspapers

"Dan": <http://www.dan.co.me/> - Daily newspaper. Printed in Cyrillic.

"Vijesti": <http://www.vijesti.me> - Daily newspaper. Printed in Latinic. 75% owned by five locals with 25% from American group (Media Loan Development Fund); Have Weekly NY Times inserts on Mondays

"Pobjeda": <http://www.pobjeda.me/> - State-owned daily newspaper. Printed in Cyrillic.

Magazines

"Monitor": <http://www.monitor.co.me> - Private weekly news magazine, the most influential independent media in the '90s. Printed in Latinic

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Not all medications may be available in pharmacies (Apotekas). It is recommended that visitors bring an adequate supply of prescription and over the counter medications. European Lyme disease, transmitted by ticks, is present in Montenegro. As there is no available vaccine for Lyme disease, preventive measures should be followed.

The quality of drinking water is good. During times of heavy rainfall water supplies may become impure, and public announcements are released for bottled or distilled water to be used for drinking.

According to the European Environment Agencies Air Quality Assessment, completed in 2008, the air quality was mostly excellent in Podgorica. However, during winter months black soot concentrations are higher due to burning of solid fuels for heating purposes.

Sewage and garbage disposal is adequate.

Fruits and vegetables are of good quality and are safe to eat using regular washing precautions.

Medical Facilities

The medical system in the Montenegro is experiencing many problems maintaining Western medical standards and must be viewed with caution. Dental care in Podgorica can be good and is inexpensive compared to the US.

Medications you need may not be available in Podgorica. Local pharmacies may be able to order medications from other areas of Europe. However, this could be expensive, takes time, and advance payment is required. Medicines MUST be paid for at the time of the purchase locally.

Community Health

The quality of the drinking water in Podgorica is good at this time. Fluoride is inadequate in drinking water. Children between the ages of 6 months and 16 years are encouraged to use fluoride supplements.

Surface waters (streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, and seashores) are likely to be contaminated with sewage in the Balkan region. Local sewage treatment facilities are antiquated and undersized leading to much raw sewage entering local waterways. It is recommended to avoid contact with surface waters in the Balkan region.

Fruits and vegetables are usually of good quality and need to be washed with soap and water and rinsed. Meats should be purchased from shops where a high volume of meat sales is expected and refrigeration equipment appears modern and efficient. It is safe to eat locally made yogurts and sour cream from commercial dairies. Local cheeses which are commercially manufactured under supervision and sold in supermarkets are also safe.

Podgorica's air quality can be very poor during the winter months. This is largely due to smog produced by the burning of low-grade coal, although automobile exhaust, cold air inversions, and other factors also contribute to the pollution.

General attention to good respiratory hygiene by avoiding common colds (hand washing, cover cough, and stay home when ill, etc.) is of some benefit. Saline nose drops can be made utilizing a solution of one teaspoon of table salt added to one pint of distilled water. Used regularly, these can wash irritating chemicals from the delicate nasal membranes. A small amount of petroleum jelly can be applied to each nostril daily to reduce winter nosebleeds and soothe the anterior nasal passages.

SECURITY

The Department of State currently rates Podgorica as "Medium" for crime. Petty thefts and residential break-in are uncommon, but have happened on occasion. Visitors should take the same precautions with their belongings that they would in any large international city.

Perhaps the biggest safety concerns in Montenegro are the road conditions and the driving. Impatient drivers, high speeds coupled with reckless and aggressive driving make a dangerous mix. A majority of accidents caused in 2010 were caused by DUI (driving under the influence), aggressive/violent driving, and not respecting a pedestrian's way. Roads outside of the major cities are of poor construction. Of particular note, driving in the mountains of Montenegro is extremely dangerous. Drivers often pass at high rates of speed on poorly constructed roads and around blind turns. There are few, if any, guardrails or areas for drivers to pull off the road if necessary.

Indigenous threats of terrorism, war or civil unrest to Americans are low. Organized crime and the associated violence and corruption it creates remain a concern. Transnational terrorism or international terrorism concerns within Montenegro are the same for the rest of the Balkans, as Montenegro sits on a primary land route between Western Europe and the Middle East. Its large coastline also provides ease of movement for terrorists to transit into other Balkan states. Montenegrin authorities are sensitive to and intolerant of transnational terrorism encroaching into the country.

UTILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Standard electric power is 220v/50hertz for lights and standard outlets. Plugs are European "SCHUKO" (CEE-7) type with 28mm rod contacts. Incandescent lights require a 230v bulb. Many new appliances, computers, and audio equipment allow conversion to, or automatically adapt to 220v/50hertz. Other appliances such as telephones may require a small converter. Power outages are not frequent but power spikes can be common.

FOOD

Basic food items are plentiful on the local market, and are reasonably priced. Fruits and vegetables, when in season, are less expensive than in the U.S. grocery stores. Meat is available, but cuts are rough and sanitation practices are not always up to Western standards. Processed foods are generally available, but these are European brands.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are available in season at low prices from street vendors located throughout town. These vendors are generally open daily. Although the markets are open year round, the selection of produce changes dramatically during the colder months. Mediterranean fruits are available here in season at low cost, including pomegranates, figs, and kiwis. You can usually count on basic vegetables (carrots, potatoes, cabbage, onion) year-round, but variety may be a problem.

CLOTHING

Clothing needs are similar to those for Washington, DC or New York City. Wardrobes should include clothing for cool winters and hot summers. Clothing for adults can be purchased locally but selection is limited. A number of local chains have stylish merchandise available at reasonable prices, including fashionable leather items. Imported name brands—Hugo Boss, Max Mara, etc.—are available but they are generally more expensive than in the U.S. Children's clothing and shoes are available but the selection is limited, and the prices are high. Many prefer to shop elsewhere or order from the internet. A shopping mall is now available with approx. 30 stores, prices are more reasonable than in the older shopping areas in town.

SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

Most supplies for personal or household use are available locally. As with all shopping in Podgorica, it can take quite a bit of searching to find exactly the item you want. U.S. brands of toiletries, detergents and cleaning supplies are not available, but local and well-known European brands are satisfactory and generally inexpensive. Products such as paper towels, napkins, wrapping paper, and plastic wrap are available and inexpensive although the quality is not what you would expect to see in the U.S.

There are three bookstores in Podgorica with some British and American books, but the supply of English-language children's books is non-existent. Prices for good quality toys can be higher than in the U.S.

Most basic services are available in Podgorica. Dry cleaning is available and adequate, with prices similar to the U.S. Inexpensive barbers and hairdressers are available. Repair services are of good quality and inexpensive.

Religious Activities

Most churches in the Podgorica area are Serbian Orthodox, but there are also Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and a Mosque.

English-language services are not commonly available in Podgorica. Exception: The Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant church in Niksic have English-language services.

EDUCATION

Dependent Education

An international school opened in January 2006.

Quality Schools International, www.qsi.org.

There are no English-language high school education options in Podgorica.

RECREATION AND SOCIAL LIFE

Podgorica is a small city (~160,000 people), so recreation and social life opportunities are not as great as in other larger European capitals.

The SterCinema movie theater in Delta City mall that shows movies in original English with Montenegrin subtitles.

The National Theater has occasionally presented plays with English subtitles on a screen.

There are parks in and around the center of town, some with modern playground equipment, allowing people an outdoor place to take the children to play or for adults to sit and read a book.

There are a few indoor playgrounds for children. Two known playgrounds (Jump, Dora the Explorer) are located near the center, pedestrian area of town.

Sports

Podgorica has basic facilities for tennis, volleyball, basketball, swimming, soccer, and various others sports. There are some running paths on the edge of town. Bicycling is not recommended on city streets, due to aggressive driving, but would be possible (if still hazardous) outside of town on less frequented roads. There are some gyms offering basic workout facilities.

Podgorica has numerous club sports teams around town. The largest one, Buducnost, frequently represents Montenegro in Eurocup competitions in both Basketball and Soccer.

Touring and Outdoor Activities

The principal attraction of Montenegro is its dramatic scenery, which can be appreciated in a variety of ways. The country offers a wealth of outdoor activities, from skiing to hiking to rafting to scuba-diving. As Montenegro is a small country, no place is farther than a day or weekend trip from Podgorica. Although the tourism sector is mostly geared toward beach vacations (and to a lesser extent ski trips), facilities do exist for a variety of activities. However, these are not always up to American standards or what Americans would expect to find in other European countries.

There are many opportunities for touring in Montenegro. Monasteries and places of natural beauty and historical significance are abundant in the country. Private guided tours are easily arranged as well.

Entertainment

Cultural activities in Podgorica are limited. There is a National Theater with frequent programming, but the performances are almost all in Serbian. Occasional concerts are given by touring groups. Some of these are held at a local jazz club as well. There are a number of bars, some of them of a sophisticated nature, with a few of them offering live music. During the tourist season many places on the coast offer additional entertainment options, and there are occasional festivals (for example, in Budva).

The mall has a modern 6 screen movie theater and show American films with Serbian subtitles, as well as other foreign films and local productions. The quality of the theaters is average by

American standards. American and European films and television series are often shown on local television. AFN satellite services are available with purchase of the receiver equipment.

Podgorica has a few professional sports teams, the most popular of which (by far) is the "Buducnost" basketball team, which plays in the Montenegrin League and the Euroleague (depending on results).

Social Activities

Podgorica is European in its approach to eating and drinking, and the cafes and restaurants are plentiful. Food on the street corners is inexpensive and flavorful. Podgorica has some restaurants featuring local or Italian cuisine, and these are less expensive than in the U.S.. There is not a wide selection of international cuisine. Many Montenegrins go to the Adriatic coast during the warmer months, as these towns have some good restaurants. While Montenegrins rely heavily on meat and dairy products for their national cuisine, there are usually vegetarian options but few choices. Fresh fish and sea foods are abundant, especially on the coast.

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

The recommended routing between the U.S. and Podgorica is via Vienna or Frankfurt. Transiting Belgrade is also a possibility although the Embassy cautions that JAT and Montenegro Airlines uses small planes to fly into Montenegro, this can cause connection and luggage issues.

CURRENCY, BANKING, AND WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Montenegro's Currency is the Euro.

Montenegro's banking sector has many small private banks. Some of which are affiliated with large European bank institutions. ATMs are readily available in Podgorica and other important business centers. However, smaller towns in villages have no banks or ATMs for money withdraw.

Montenegro businesses generally have the ability to accept credit card payments, but it is not welcome by most businesses. They will charge a higher price for card payments. Having cash is necessary for any trip outside of city centers. Having cash is advised for shopping in Podgorica and other commercial centers.

Montenegro uses the metric system for all units of measurements. Kilometers for distance, KPH for speed, Meters, Centimeters, and Millimeters for small sizes. Grams and Kilos for weight. Liters and Milliliters for volume.

Montenegro is in the Central European Time Zone (+1 UTC) and observes Day-Light summer time. Most times on businesses and events are in 24 hour time format.

RECOMMENDED READING

These titles are provided as a general indication of the material published about this country.
The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications

Realm of the Black Mountain: A History of Montenegro by Elizabeth Roberts, (Hurst & Co, 2007)
ISBN 978-1-85065-868-9

Montenegro: The Divided Land by Thomas Fleming, (2002) ISBN 0-9619364-9-5

The following websites might be useful for additional information about Podgorica (websites may only be in Montenegrin):

City of Podgorica:	http://podgorica.co.me
Tourist Board of Podgorica	http://en.pgto.org/index.php
KIC - Cultral Center	http://www.kicpodgorica.com
CNP - National Theater	http://www.cnp.me
Start Montenegro - Entertainment Guide	http://www.startmontenegro.com
Delta City - Shopping Mall	http://www.deltacity.me
Ster Cinema	http://stermontenegro.com
Buducnost - Soccer Club	http://fkbuducnost.co.me
Buducnost - Basketball Club	http://kkbuducnost.co.me
Broadband Montenegro - Cable TV	http://bbm.co.me
T-com - TV and phone service	http://www.t-com.me